



JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF
CALIFORNIA
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
OF THE COURTS
Public Information Office
455 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102-3688
www.courtinfo.ca.gov

415-865-7740

Lynn Holton
Public Information Officer

NEWS RELEASE

Release Number: 78

Date: December 7, 2007

Judicial Council Sets Legislative Priorities for Courts in Coming Year

San Francisco – At a public meeting today, the Judicial Council of California approved a plan to pursue legislation to increase judgeships in the state trial courts, seek more funding for court security, and improve the judges' retirement system to encourage more qualified attorneys to apply for judgeships.

The 28-member Judicial Council is the administrative policy-making body for California courts chaired by Chief Justice Ronald M. George. Today's meeting was one of six regular business meetings conducted this year to improve the administration of state courts.

Among the 2008 legislative priorities approved for the courts are these:

- Extend the deadline for courthouses to transfer to state governance to provide safe, secure, and adequate courthouses in each county.
- Secure more funding so that appropriate security is provided for all persons who enter the trial courts.
- Create 50 new trial court judgeships to help ensure that state trial courts deliver timely justice to Californians.
- Reform the Judges' Retirement System II (JRS II) so that the judiciary continues to attract qualified attorneys from ethnically and racially diverse backgrounds and a wide array of public and private sector legal practices.

OTHER ACTIONS

In other actions, the Judicial Council:

Uniform Bail Schedule: Approved revisions to the Uniform Bail and Penalty Schedules to become effective January 1, 2008. Vehicle Code

(over)

section 40310 provides that the Judicial Council must annually adopt a uniform traffic penalty schedule for all nonparking Vehicle Code infractions.

Judicial Resources: Approved a plan for converting subordinate judicial officer positions (SJOs) to judgeships as quickly as possible to provide greater judicial resources for the trial courts. The plan approved involves an allocation methodology for the 11 SJO positions that remain eligible for conversion in fiscal 2007-2008, and 146 SJO positions that are eligible for conversion in subsequent years under Assembly Bill 159.

Security Screening Stations: Approved a proposed funding allocation for replacing aging screening station equipment in state trial courts. The funding was included in the Budget Act of 2007.

New Criminal Case Rule: Approved a revision in the California Rules of Court that will clarify that all requests for criminal trial continuances – including trailing cases – must comply with the “good cause” requirement of Penal Code section 1050. The revision is designed to encourage courts to actively manage trial calendars to preserve trial court flexibility and resources to minimize the number of statutory dismissals.

Probate Education Requirements: Approved new rules of court to (1) establish initial and continuing education requirements for judicial officers assigned to hear proceedings under the Probate Code; (2) establish qualification and education requirements for court staff investigators, examiners, and probate attorneys; and (3) establish qualifications and continuing educational requirements that counsel must meet to be appointed by the court to represent minors, conservatees, and proposed conservatees.

#

The Judicial Council is the policymaking body of the California courts, the largest court system in the nation. Under the leadership of the Chief Justice and in accordance with the California Constitution, the council is responsible for ensuring the consistent, independent, impartial, and accessible administration of justice. The Administrative Office of the Courts carries out the official actions of the council and promotes leadership and excellence in court administration.